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ABSTRACT

One objective of this study was to discover whether education of students on the 45-15 plan differed from that provided on the traditional schedule. Another objective was to assess the attitudes of the educators, parents, students, and business people of Prince William County toward the two plans. The educational evaluation compared, across calendars, indicators of student achievement and quality of education such as test scores, grades, failure rates, attendance, extracurricular activities, course offerings, pursuit of further education by high school graduates, and summer school attendance. Results showed that education afforded by the two plans did not differ, but attitudes about them were considerably polarized. Negative aspects of the 45-15 plan included potential problems involving student use of time outside of school, vacations and time spent with the family, and opportunities for part-time jobs. (Author/LD)

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE 45-15 PLAN AND THE TRADITIONAL CALENDAR IN THE PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF VIRGINIA

Executive Summary

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE 45-15 PLAN AND THE TRADITIONAL CALENDAR IN THE PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF VIRGINIA

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As one aspect of meeting the educational needs of Prince William County students, the School Board evaluated the efficacy of the 45-15 calendar. This calendar was implemented to accommodate more students within existing school facilities. Presently, about 60 percent of the schools in Prince William County operate on the 45-15 year-round plan.

The School Board authorized the Allen Corporation of America to study the year-round calendar and obtain information which would assist the Board in weighing the various courses of action available. The study had the following two main objectives.

The first objective was to discover whether education afforded students on the 45-15 plan differed from that provided through the traditional schedule. In this regard, a host of educational variables were evaluated across schools in selected pairs at the elementary, middle, and high school level. The educational variables included standardized test scores, grades, general attendance figures, summer school attendance, extracurricular activities, course offerings, and others.

The second objective was to assess the attitudes and opinions of the educators, parents, students, and business/civic element of Prince William County toward the 45-15 plan in comparison to the traditional school calendar. This objective was accomplished through four surveys, one for each of the aforenamed groups.

Educational Evaluation

Objectives and Procedures

In order to determine whether there was a difference in the education being received by students in the Prince William County Public School System (45-15 plan as compared to the traditional schedule) a comparative evaluation was performed. Variables were compared across three pairs of schools; one pair each at the elementary, middle, and high school level. These schools were selected for this study by the Prince William County School Board as being the most reasonably comparable. Overall County data were used in certain areas to supplement the basic paired comparisons. The variables studied were:

Variables

Short Test of Educational Ability (STEA)
SRA Achievement Sub-Tests
Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED)
Scholastic Aptitude Test--College Boards (SAT)
Test of Standard Written English (TSWE)
Graduates Pursuing Further Education
Scholastic Honors Recognition
Grades (by marking period and end of year)

Failure Rate (by marking period)
Summer School and Intersession Attendance
Retention Rate
Readiness/Transition (first marking period grades)
Attendance
Course Offerings
Extra-Curricular Activities

Data for all variables were cross tabulated and tested to identify statistically significant differences in education provided by the comparison schools which could be attributed solely or primarily to a difference in school schedule (traditional vs 45-15). Overall, no differences of any major consequence were found. The overall impression obtained suggests that the education afforded by either calendar is not, in any real sense, different from the other. Conclusion summaries follow.

STEA and SRA Data Conclusion

On the basis of the comparisons of STEA and SRA percentile means across the three pairs of study schools, it was concluded that there was no evidence to indicate that either calendar is more effective than the other.

Grade Data Conclusion

At the elementary school level (grades one through three) students received a substantially higher proportion of "A" and "B" letter grades in the 45-15 school than in the comparison (traditional) school. A comparable difference also existed in grades four and five, but to a lesser degree. Perhaps younger children may be able to set and achieve short term goals more effectively than long term goals. Additionally, the 45-15 schedule may be more amenable to short range goals than the traditional calendar. At the middle and high school level, the distribution of letter grades was essentially the same for the traditional and 45-15 schools.

SAT/TSWE Data Conclusion

A comparison of SAT and TSWE scores for 1976-77 found Stonewall Jackson High School and Woodbridge (45-15) to be virtually identical.

High School Graduates Pursuing Further Education Conclusion

From the available information, there is no basis for concluding that one calendar is superior to the other regarding pursuit of further education.

Attendance Data Conclusion

Attendance figures for the comparison schools were not significantly different at the elementary or middle school levels. A small but statistically significant difference was found at the high school level, with attendance higher at the traditional calendar school. Given the information at hand, however, it is not possible to attribute to school calendar the difference in attendance observed between the comparison high schools.

Summer School Data Conclusion

Variations found in attendance likely reflect differences in student needs, available staff or resources at the school, or other factors unknown to the study. While the configuration of causes for this may vary at different school levels, it appears unlikely that an extensive analysis into this variable would yield anything of major consequence insofar as the issue of the traditional schedule vs the 45-15 schedule is concerned. In conclusion, there was insufficient information overall upon which to determine whether school calendar was a causal factor in differences noted.

High School Seniors Honors Data Conclusion

Stonewall Jackson (traditional) appeared to have a slight edge over Woodbridge (45-15) in the area of academic scholarships. No reason could be found to attribute this difference to school calendar. Rather than dismiss the observed differences in scholastic honors received, however, the writers tentatively award a point to the traditional school in this area, with the intent of calling attention to the finding rather than forming a definite conclusion as to the effect, here, of the school calendar.

Course Offerings Conclusion

The number and type of courses offered by the traditional school selected for this evaluation significantly exceeded those offered by the 45-15 comparison school. The educational value of that difference, however, must be weighed in terms of the needs of the students, community, and the school resources which may operate independently of the respective school calendars. In view of the difference noted, a point is awarded tentatively to the traditional school.

Extracurricular Activities Data Conclusion

Based on a review of the type, frequency, and amount of student participation regarding extracurricular activities at the six comparison schools, it is concluded that no differences of significant magnitude exist which can be attributed to a difference between the 45-15 and the traditional calendar.

Educator Opinion Survey

Objective

The purpose of this phase of the study was to assess the attitude of Prince William County educators concerning the 45-15 plan in relation to the traditional school schedule. The survey was designed to cover a range of areas and was conducted through written questionnaire to which all Prince William County educators and professional staff in the schools had an opportunity to respond. The survey instrument, developed for purposes of the

study, consisted of 61 question items concerning aspects of the school calendar or its possible effects. The educators were asked to respond on a five point scale indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item. Further, respondents could also write supplementary comments if they so desired.

Results

Of 1,997 questionnaires distributed, 1,410 were returned. Out of 717 educators who indicated they were presently on the 45-15 calendar, 51 percent (363) wished to remain on 45-15, while 49 percent (354) desired to change to the traditional calendar. There were 541 educators who indicated that they were presently on the traditional calendar with only two percent (2%) expressing a desire to change to the 45-15 plan; the remaining 98 percent (530) stated that they preferred to stay on the traditional calendar.

Of those who expressed a preference for remaining on 45-15, there were significantly more men than women. Additionally, educators now on the traditional calendar were found to be significantly older and more experienced than those on the 45-15 plan. The absolute difference in terms of years was not great, but it was statistically significant. Overall, seventy percent of the educators indicated a preference for the traditional calendar.

Factor Analysis of the Educator Opinion Survey

The data from the educator opinion survey were factor analyzed to determine whether certain constructs or "issues" were present as evidenced by the interrelationship of item responses. The analysis yielded six factors which were as follows:

Factor I:	"Outside-School Planning x Satisfaction with Calendar"
Factor II:	"Student Behavior on the Year-Round Calendar"
Factor III:	"Evaluation of Work Setting"
Factor IV:	"Student Academic Performance"
Factor V:	"Student Employment Opportunities on the Year-Round Calendar"
Factor VI:	"Professional Planning Time"

In the present analysis, Factor I is the central issue in regard to calendar preference. It centers on the educators' concern about the school

calendar and its impact on outside-of-school planning as is involved in pursuit of further education, vacations for teachers, parents and students, in-service, etc. Thus, educator satisfaction with respective school calendars is depending upon how one's school calendar either facilitates or hinders out-of-school personal activities. Traditional calendar educators overall were satisfied with their calendar, apparently finding it personally accommodating. The 45-15 calendar educators were divided. About one-half of this latter group preferred the calendar but was generally undecided as to the extent of their satisfaction; the other half was negative toward the 45-15 calendar and desired to change to the traditional calendar.

Factor II focused on the issue of student behavior in the 45-15 setting. Again, 45-15 educators who preferred that setting largely espoused an undecided or neutral position; 45-15's who favored the traditional calendar viewed student behavior unfavorably. The largest subgroup--those on the traditional calendar and preferring it--fell between the two subgroups and thus may have been presenting second-hand opinion. Finally, the vast majority of educators surveyed strongly disagreed with the notion of expanding the year-round calendar to all schools.

In Factor III, most educators evaluated their work settings as being generally good. As in Factor I, educators preferring the traditional calendar were most pleased with their work settings; those preferring the 45-15 calendar were next most pleased; and, the 45-15 educators favoring the traditional calendar were least pleased of all educators responding to the survey.

Factor IV represented educator impressions of student academic performance (irrespective of calendar). Educators' attitudes toward student academic performance were related to most other factors (issues). Again, the traditional calendar staff evaluated student academic performance most favorably, educators on 45-15 and preferring that calendar evaluated it next most favorably, and 45-15 educators preferring to go to the traditional calendar provided the least positive evaluation.

Factor V represents the educators' attitude toward student employment opportunities on the 45-15 calendar. This factor was seen by the educators as directly related to the quality of student behavior. All three educator groups (traditional "stay", 45-15 "stay", and 45-15 "go") saw the 45-15 calendar as a detriment to student employment opportunities outside of school.

Factor VI represented educator attitude toward the adequacy of professional planning time. This attitude was seen as related to the educators' general satisfaction with their respective school calendars and their perceptions of the quality of student academic performance. (As one attitude tends to vary, the others will vary similarly.) The pattern established in earlier factors was again apparent: Traditional "stay's" were the most pleased about the adequacy of their professional planning time; 45-15 "stay's" were undecided; and the 45-15 "go's" tended to be dissatisfied.

Educator Demographic Data and Educator Comments

In conducting the educator opinion survey it was expected that a range of attitudes would be found and that attitudes might be related to basic demographic variables. Certain significant differences in demographic characteristics were noted between the "traditional teachers" and the "45-15 teachers" as two major groups. The traditional teachers were older, had more years of experience, and had been in their respective schools longer than the 45-15 group. Considering all of the demographic data analyzed, however, the demography does not appear to be a key element in this study. The differences noted, while statistically significant, were simply not of great magnitude.

Written comments made by the educators were consistent with the results of the formal questionnaire; remarks were generally unfavorable toward the 45-15 plan, and most of the comments were made by educators on the 45-15 plan (very few comments were made by educators on the traditional calendar).

Summary and General Conclusions for the Educator Opinion Survey

Of the 2,000 educators in the Prince William County School System, approximately seventy percent responded to this survey. Of those who responded, about seven out of ten were in favor of the traditional calendar in comparison to the 45-15 plan. Essentially, no one presently on the traditional calendar elected to change to the 45-15 plan, while half of those on the 45-15 plan desired to change to the traditional plan. For varying reasons, the educators overall did not favor the 45-15 plan.

Parent Opinion Survey

Objective

The purpose of this phase of the study was to assess the attitude of the parents of Prince William County students concerning the 45-15 plan as compared to the traditional schedule. The parent sample was designed as a random, ten percent sample of every school in Prince William County and was conducted through telephone interview over a period of several weeks. Parents were identified from student (school) membership records in sampling the family unit.

Results

Of the 2,285 parent interviews completed, 2,158 were accepted for analysis purposes. Out of 644 parents presently on the traditional schedule, 21 percent (137) wished to change to the 45-15 schedule, while the remaining 79 percent (507) preferred to stay on the traditional schedule. The overall distribution of preference was evenly divided with 1,082 in favor of the 45-15 plan and 1,076 in favor of the traditional schedule.

Factor Analysis of the Parent Opinion Survey

Data from the parent opinion survey were factor analyzed to determine whether certain constructs or "issues" were present. The analysis yielded four factors which were as follows:

Factor I:	"Quality of Education on the Year-Round Calendar"
Factor II:	"Evaluation of Vacation Schedule Effects on the Year-Round Calendar"
Factor III:	"Outside Job Opportunities/Activities for Students on the Year-Round Calendar"
Factor IV:	"Student Behavior in Home/Community/School on the Year-Round Calendar

Factor I indicated that the quality of education on the 45-15 plan appeared to be the major issue for parents. This factor was found to have a significant bearing on parent attitudes toward other issues. Thus, how a parent views quality of 45-15 education will directly affect his or her attitudes toward other relevant issues. On the mathematical average, parents held an undecided attitude toward the quality of 45-15 education. However, parents were actually divided in their opinion toward this issue. About one-half of the parents evaluated the issue of quality 45-15 education in a moderately positive direction; the other one-half viewed it with moderate negativeness. In summary, it appears that parents are somewhat divided (moderately polarized) on this issue.

Factor II, a relatively minor issue, focused on parent attitude toward the effect of the 45-15 vacation schedule on students and family. This factor also was related to other factors to a substantial degree with parents again moderately polarized in attitude as to how the 45-15 plan vacation schedule actually affects the family unit. As in Factor I, one-half of the parents tended to favor 45-15 calendar on this issue while the other half tended toward disfavoring it. The polarization pattern, here, remained moderate rather than extreme.

Factor III, a relatively minor issue, represented parent attitude toward outside job opportunities and activities afforded students by the 45-15 plan. This factor, too, was related to other factors. Overall, parents held an undecided-to-unfavorable attitude toward this factor. Parents with children on the 45-15 plan tended to view this issue slightly more favorably than traditional calendar parents; still, most all parents expressed a negative attitude.

Factor IV, also a relatively minor issue, focused upon the effects of the year-round calendar on student behavior in the home/community/school. This factor, too, was related to other factors. Thus, how parents view this issue will affect, to a substantial degree, their attitude toward other relevant issues. Parents favoring the traditional

plan (about 1/2 of the sample) held an undecided regard for student behavior on the 45-15 plan; parents favoring 45-15 showed a moderate tendency toward a positive evaluation. As with prior factors, the moderate polarization amongst the parents in the sample (a 50/50 split) remained a persisting pattern in Factor IV.

Parent Demographic Data and Parent Comments

Demographic data were collected in order to provide a more complete description of the parent survey sample. The demographic variables were examined in relation to present calendar and calendar preference. No demographic differences of any consequence were found relative to either present calendar or calendar preference.

About 20 percent of the parents interviewed made additional comments. The remark category occurring most frequently (18 percent) was favorable to the 45-15 plan. The next most frequent remark category (13 percent) was opposed to the 45-15 plan. The remainder of the remarks were of relatively low frequency. Nevertheless, the comments showed insight and consciencious thought regarding the issue of school calendar.

Summary and General Conclusions for the Parent Opinion Survey

On the average, parents appeared unsure as to the worth of the 45-15 plan -- neither favoring nor disfavoring it greatly. Parents with children on the 45-15 plan did tend to provide consistently more positive evaluations than traditional calendar parents. This difference, while a moderate one, remained a persisting pattern and clearly showed moderate parent polarization on the 45-15 vs traditional calendar issue. Parents felt that an effective 45-15 education plan would accommodate outside job opportunities/activities for students (call this: issue relationship #1). Further, they felt that an effective 45-15 "family" vacation schedule would accommodate positive student behavior in home/community/school (call this: issue relationship #2). In the final analysis, however, parents tended to feel that issue relationship #1 was incompatible with #2. Thus, as parents see it, one or the other relationship (#1 or #2) can generally be had, but not both compatibly. This suggests a parent focus on the relative values of 45-15 vs family relationships.

Student Opinion Survey

Objective

The purpose of this phase of the study was to discover how students in the Prince William County schools felt about the 45-15 plan as compared to the traditional calendar.

Student Interview Form

A student interview form was developed for the sample of students (who were children of the parents surveyed). Parent permission was obtained to interview each student. A total of 1,416 telephone interviews

were conducted, comprised of the following distribution by school level: 328 elementary, 462 middle, and 626 high school students (elementary students were interviewed only for grades four, five, and six).

Results

Based on the responses to the question, "What school schedule would you like to be on?", a preference distribution for students was determined. For the students now on the 45-15 schedule, 67 percent would prefer to stay on that schedule, while 33 percent would prefer the traditional schedule. Further. of 354 students on the traditional schedule, 17 percent preferred to change to the 45-15 plan while the remaining 83 percent wished to stay on the traditional calendar.

The overall division (based on the 1,303 students who expressed a preference one way or the other) was 53 percent in favor of the 45-15 plan and 47 percent in favor of the traditional calendar. This distribution was quite similar to that found for the parents.

Factor Analysis of the Student Opinion Survey

The student opinion data were factor analyzed. Four factors (issues) were found and were as follows:

Factor I:	"Quality of Education on the Year-Round Calendar"
Factor II:	"Satisfaction with Year-Round Calendar x Attitude Toward Vacations"
Factor III:	"Student Behavior in Home/Community/School"
Factor IV:	"Recreational Activities as Affected by the Year-Round Plan"

Factor I (the focal issue for students) indicated that students viewed quality 45-15 education as substantially incompatible with satisfactory vacation schedules, student behavior, and (yet to a much lesser extent) recreational activities. As students see it, then, either a quality 45-15 education plan or the latter elements may be had -- but not both compatibly. Overall, students on the 45-15 plan and those on the traditional calendar tended to be unsure in attitude toward this factor. Those students on the 45-15 plan did show a slightly more favorable regard for the quality of year-round education than did the traditional students.

Factor II, a relatively minor issue, was that of student attitude toward the year-round calendar in relation to their degree of satisfaction with their vacation schedule. This factor showed that if a student is inclined to be satisfied with the vacation schedule, he/she will be inclined to be satisfied with the 45-15 plan in general. While 45-15 students

again held a somewhat more favorable attitude, student satisfaction (overall) with the 45-15 plan and its vacation schedules is largely undecided (with a slight inclination toward an unfavorable student evaluation). Effects of the 45-15 vacation schedule on social relations and family vacations appear to contribute significantly to the slightly less-than-favorable outlook held by the students.

Factor III, a relatively minor issue, focused upon student attitude toward general student behavior in home/community/school as affected by the 45-15 plan. Even though students on the year-round plan again showed a very slightly more favorable outlook, the students were undecided as to whether or not student behavior benefits or suffers from the effects of the year-round plan.

Factor IV, also a relatively minor issue, focused upon student attitude toward the effect of the 45-15 calendar on outside recreational activities for students. Overall, students appear undecided as to how the 45-15 calendar affects recreational opportunities. Students on the traditional calendar (while falling in the undecided range) did tend to be slightly more negative in their appraisal of this issue.

Summary and General Conclusions for the Student Opinion Survey

If the results are viewed overall, the students were about evenly divided in their preferences for the 45-15 plan vs the traditional calendar. In effect, students appeared to reflect some polarization (approximately 50/50 split) between those preferring the 45-15 plan and those preferring the traditional calendar -- not unlike that reflected by parents. Still, this difference was slight, and in general students (overall) seem undecided as to the value of the year-round plan. Throughout the survey analysis, however, students on the year-round plan consistently showed a more favorable outlook toward issues related to the 45-15 plan than students on the traditional schedule.

About ten percent of the students interviewed made additional comments. The comments were made mainly by students on the 45-15 plan, with the majority of the remarks being negative with respect to the 45-15 plan.

Community Opinion Survey

Objectives

The purpose of this phase of the study was to assess the attitudes of the business and civic community of Prince William County concerning the 45-15 school schedule. The interview was designed to obtain a basic demographic description of the respondent and his/her opinion of the 45-15 plan in general, its relation to employment opportunities for students, and its effects on the operation of local businesses and civic organizations. A random sample of twenty percent of the business and civic organizations listed in the Prince William County telephone directory were interviewed.

Results

About ninety percent of the interviewees were at least "somewhat" familiar with the 45-15 plan. Of those respondents with children in Prince William County public schools, 45.3 percent had one or more children on the 45-15 calendar, while 31.2 percent had one or more children on the traditional calendar.

In response to the question of how the 45-15 plan affected their business, two-thirds were neutral or undecided. The remaining third was equally divided between "positive" and "negative".

When asked which calendar they would select for Prince William County, the response was 55.1 percent for the "traditional", 35.3 percent for "45-15", and 4.6 percent: "no response/don't care." The remaining 5 percent declined to respond. When asked to rank order their preference for year-round vs split sessions vs building new facilities, 46.7 percent placed year-round first, 26.8 percent placed "split sessions" first, and 21.0 percent placed "build new facilities" as their first choice. The remaining 5.5 percent declined to respond. The overall attitude toward the 45-15 plan found the sample divided as follows: 41 percent were "pleased", 26 percent were "neutral", 33 percent were "displeased.

Factor Analysis of the Community Opinion Survey

The responses to the opinion question were factor analyzed. Two factors emerged and were as follows:

Factor I:	"Year-round Vacation Schedule x General Opinion Toward Effects of the Year-Round Plan"
Factor II:	"Outside Job Opportunities for Students"

Factor I, the major focal issue, indicated how the community appraises the 45-15 plan. Apparently, community satisfaction with the year-round plan is largely dependent upon how the community tends to perceive the effectiveness of the 45-15 vacation schedule for the family (parents and students). That is, if community members tend to see the 45-15 plan accommodating family vacations effectively, then they tend to evaluate it favorably (and vice versa). Overall, community members were generally unsure about the status of this first issue.

Factor II, a relatively minor issue, concerns itself with how community members see the 45-15 plan affecting student job opportunities. Overall, community members view outside job opportunities for students on the 45-15 plan from an undecided to unfavorable position -- inclined slightly toward the latter view. This view is positively related to the Factor I viewpoint held by the community members. Therefore, any change of opinion about Factor I will have a comparable effect on Factor II, and vice versa.

Community Demographic Data and Community Comments

About one half of the organizations employed persons under 19 years of age and about half provided merchandise or services to "youngsters." A majority (70.4 percent) of the firms employed parents of children attending Prince William County Schools.

With respect to community comments, about one-third of the respondents expressed an attitude toward the 45-15 plan. This one-third was about evenly divided; half in favor and half not in favor of the 45-15 plan.

Summary and General Conclusions for the Community Opinion Survey

Given a choice of schedules for Prince William County Schools, 57 percent would prefer the traditional calendar, 37 percent would prefer the 45-15 plan, and 6 percent were noncommittal.

In general it appears that the business and civic organizations represented in this sample are not strongly opposed to the 45-15 plan but, given a choice, they would prefer the traditional schedule. The year-round plan, however, was to be preferred over building new facilities or operating the schools on a split session.

Concluding Remarks

A brief recapitulation of the objectives and findings of this study is presented in the abstract at the front of the complete report. Therefore, that task will not be repeated here. Rather, it seems appropriate to address the broader question of: "Given the data of Sections I-V, what does it all mean?" To this question, two responses are offered.

First, it must be kept in mind that this study was essentially a data collection and reduction effort. To be sure, the data were collected in a manner that would facilitate comparisons between the two school calendars at issue, and certain inferences and conclusions in that regard were drawn. The "meaning" of the study, however, lies outside of the pages presented here. It lies in the interpretation and use of the information analyses provided in the full report. That use, in turn, depends upon a host of criteria to which the authors of this report do not have access. Insofar as the available data are concerned, there is no remarkable difference in the education provided under the two calendars. Yet, any reputable scientist knows that one does not set out to execute an experiment to prove that "no difference" exists; differences may lie outside of the precision of available measurement instruments.

It should be noted also that one could easily run additional statistical tests on more combinations and comparisons of variables than called for in this study. The result would most likely be a series of

statistically significant effects. But these effects would scarcely be of consequence to the issue at hand. In essence, to conclude that one calendar was truly superior to another would require evidence of a magnitude that would not escape the eye and would not rely on a thousand cases to reach statistical significance. With a large enough sample size, just about any difference will appear of statistical significance. But to know what to do about it, or what causes it, is another matter. In this regard the writers believe that the present data were examined to a point beyond which further sifting would be irrelevant to the primary user.

The second response to the initial question is that the information provided here, may best be used by not reducing it to a few general conclusions. Rather, it should be viewed in the perspective of the alternatives available to the decision makers concerning school schedules in Prince William County. In this regard, several interesting points are evident. First, it is apparent that people have opinions on matters, whether or not they have experience or information on those matters. Second, while people are generally resistant to change and to the unknown, they gradually grow to accept new and different situations once they are into them. Third, as we have seen in this report, there is often a substantial "halo effect" pervading an emotionally charged issue. Once the basic problem is overcome, however, its associated detractions also diminish. Fourth, it seems reasonable to expect that preferences would be mediated by their cost, if that cost were known. In the present instance, the "price" of either calendar would not appear to be different in terms of student achievement. But teacher job satisfaction, morale, motivation, and income would be factors for a substantial portion of the Prince William County educators.

In and of itself, a study of this kind cannot point to the correct decision concerning a choice of school calendar. Nevertheless, it does identify the source and the nature of satisfactions and dissatisfactions with the two schedules addressed. Clearly, a substantial number of educators (one-fourth of total sample) find the 45-15 plan at least reasonably accommodating while the many others on the plan have expressed disfavor with the program. Further, a substantial number of educators, parents, and students in Prince William County have not had experience with the 45-15 plan. If that plan were to be considered for county-wide use, it would seem appropriate that a concerted effort be made to present a complete and factual picture of the 45-15 schedule to all concerned. This would include the matter of relative financial costs as well as the educational ramifications. From the data and comments obtained in this study, moreover, it seems likely that those who are dissatisfied with the 45-15 plan are more assertive in communicating their displeasure than are their peers who hold the opposite or less negative view.

The writers, of course, have no stake in the matter of schedule selection as addressed here. Furthermore, there are few precedents in the literature which clearly endorse one calendar over another in a manner that would be generalizable across school divisions. Each locality, it seems, must decide for itself. The choice that is finally made will be

accepted best and have the greatest chance of success if it is made by and for a fully informed community. The results of this study may be expected to have some impact on that community as would the cost-effectiveness study being done by another organization.

In summary, "what it all means" is that the significance of the data lies in its identifications of the subgroups holding differing opinions and its description of the possible reasons for those opinions. It is also significant that no evidence of differences between the calendars existed that were of any educational significance. Taking these findings at face value, the issue appears to resolve to one of attitude and, therefore, it may best be approached from that standpoint.